

When is Enough, Enough?  
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The time of year has come again when military personnel take the Performance Fitness Test (PFT). The PFT is conducted in April and October or shortly thereafter. According to military regulation OPNAVINST 6110.1H, a 10 week notification is provided announcing the test dates. This will help personnel prepare, be screened and plan accordingly. Being able to pass the PFT is crucial for our military career and job performance.

Personnel must meet height/weight criteria or body fat measurements. Height/weight requirements vary depending on age and sex. Men can not exceed 22% and women 33% body fat or the member fails the PFT and can not be tested on his or her flexibility, strength and endurance abilities. This time of year can be exciting, fun and challenging as we see how our performance improves and we partake in camaraderie. Unfortunately, this time of year becomes very stressful for many as numerous military personnel struggle to make weight and/or body fat requirements.

The amount of people that attempt drastic measure to lose weight 4-6 weeks before the weigh-in week is amazing to see. Drastic measures include fad diets such as the Atkins Diet, Sugar Busters, the Ornish Diet, the cabbage soup diet, the abs diet or the ultimate cellulite burning diet. Other are willing to ingest herbal supplements that cost \$50 or more to include Hydroxycut, Xenedrine, DYMA-BURN or Tight, Lipolytic Edge targeted to define the tummy area, firm the buttocks, shape those thighs and burn the ever so unwanted fat. We are willing to spend money, sacrifice foods we enjoy, deprive our bodies of nutrients for normal brain function, and ingest harmful chemicals that are not approved safe by the Food and Drug Administration. Why do we do this to ourselves?

Many blame it on unrealistic requirements the military places upon us. Others make excuses justifying why following a fad diet and/or taking herbal supplements need to be used this time to make weight so they do not fail the PFT and jeopardize their career. Promises are made that after passing the PFT he or she will commit to a lifestyle of healthy foods, proper portion control and daily exercise. Some individuals will make the commitment to be healthy, accept support and make lifestyle changes that support their military career. Other may make weight or body fat requirements and gain back 10-30# in the following 4-5 months and resume the negative cycle of drastic measures 4-6 weeks before weighing in again. An individual who makes those lifestyle changes and gets out of the negative rut deserves praise and applause because overcoming weight challenges is a daily battle.

How do I know this? I too have struggled with the same issues for years and chose to study nutrition to help make permanent changes. Since being a Navy Dietitian nearly 6 years this is a common trend I see every 6 months. I understand your struggles and have a simple question to ask, when is enough, enough? Why do you choose to continue down this road? There is assistance available to help you get within standards, in a healthy way, which can be life-long. The choice is yours. Are you willing to ask and

accept support? Contact your local nutrition department and learn more about Ship Shape, weekly eating disorder and weight management support groups, and individualized appointments. Call 643-7502 now, we care about you, your health and your career.